1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

622 kingdoms or *garhs* of forgotten chiefs, or divisions of the early
623 medieval Telanga kingdoms of Barsur, Dantewara or Bhairamgarh.
632 The Marias there are perhaps later arrivals, spread over a land once ruled by comparatively civilized and organized Telanga princes. There are *pargana* headmen, with wide influence and authority; but their authority possibly does not derive in the same sense from the clan, and may have been conferred in the not very distant past by the State because of the obvious advantages of having such central intermediaries between the State and the tribes. They have to deal with villages of many different clans, and far larger villages at that than those of the Hill Marias. These villages are still throwing off new *para* or hamlets, which often become bigger than the parent village, and soon for practical reasons have to have their own *peda* and *perma*, though these will be called the *chudala*, or small, in contrast to the *birya*, or big, *peda* and *perma* of the parent village. Among the Bison-horn Marias, therefore, it is natural to find the village *panchayat* exercising a more real authority and greater independence of the *pargana* headman and *panchayat* than among the Hill Marias. Nevertheless the formal recognition under the recent State orders of the *pargana* headman and his *panchayat* as a court of appeal from the judicial decisions of the village elders is bound to strengthen his position. The Bison-horn Maria has always been more in contact with and more ready to learn from the outside world than the Hill Maria, and there are many village and *pargana* headmen who show real leadership and force of character.

689 Social offences involving exclusion from tribal ceremonies and
564 feasts are very similar in these days to those of neighbouring Hindu
684 castes. The worst offences are to get maggots in wounds, to take
688 food from or have sexual relations with persons of the despised Ghasia, Mahra or Lohar castes, and to break the rules of exogamy by having sexual relations with a girl of a brother-clan. Another offence, which among the Bison-horn Marias may lead to considerable trouble, is the eating of any new crop or the cutting of grass or bamboo before the appropriate *pandum* has been celebrated; this form of sacrilege is believed to be avenged by the earth or clan-god sending tigers to carry off cattle or men, and in a case which came before me in which such a visitation had followed the cutting of grass by two villagers before the Kare Pandum the *panchayat* had ordered them to compensate the owner of each cow or bullock killed by the avenging tigers. The way in which breaches of the rules of exogamy are dealt with has already been described
689 (pages 245-6 above). Any form of social relations with Ghasia,
564 Mahra or Lohar, however unwitting, entails penalties not only
783 on the actual offender, but also often on his near kinsmen. In the

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

841 In Chandabera the Muria described how once when a man had touched a menstruating woman the Gaita heated gold and touched his forehead, tongue and shoulders, sprinkled him with rice-water and water in which gold had been [628] dipped, made him drink it in the name of the Earth Mother who had been insulted, and imposed upon him a heavy fine.

This is the same penalty as that extracted from a murderer on return from jail. It does not necessarily mean that the Muria regard the two offences as morally equal, but it does suggest that they regard them as equally dangerous in the supernatural field.

A woman's husband also is subject to the strictest rules. During his wife's period, he must not dig the ground, visit his fields, either to sow or reap, thatch the roof, go to the thrashing floor, touch the grain-bins in the house, or visit the village shrines. If he visits his thrashing floor the quantity of his grain is reduced by half. But he may go to the ghotul and sleep there, though no one will take tobacco from his hands. He is allowed to fetch water and cook; [522] indeed he generally has to do this work when his wife is barred from it, and many are the ribald jests that greet a young husband caught carrying pots from the well.

841 If he is a priest, he cannot conduct any religious ceremony during his wife's period, and festivals often have to be postponed on this account. A curious 539 story from Korenda illustrates the special difficulties that may trouble a polygamous Gaita.

> At the beginning of the world, there was no god of the Wadder clansmen, though they were numerous enough, while on the other hand there was a god of the Partabi though there was only one solitary male member of the clan. He was the Gaita and he had seven wives. Since one or other of his wives was in her period all the month round, he was never able to perform his priestly duties properly. They were due to eat the new rice on Monday: on Sunday night his eldest wife began her period. They postponed the festival till Friday: but no sooner had the eldest wife bathed on Wednesday than the youngest began on Thursday. And so on, he could never keep the festival, till Dokara Deo began to trouble the Gaita and he gave both his gods, Budha Deo and Dokara Deo, to the Wadder clan.

841 How do these taboos affect the ghotul? The great majority of Muria girls experience the crisis of the menarche while they are still motiari. Only in a few villages like Malakot do the people try to get girls married before maturity. Even where they are married, the little wives may sleep in the ghotul till they are mature. At her first period, a girl-wife gives *jori-darango* or a gift of liquor to the boys and girls 'to show her companionship with them is ended'.

The ghotul members take a great interest in the menarche. Everybody 841 knows all about it at once and there is a lot of joking and laughter. 'Our 522 new pot is broken, where can we go and clean it?' 'She has trodden on dirty leaves.' 'The embankment of the field is leaking.' When the chelik see the girl sitting plaintive and embarrassed behind her house or in the segregated hut they call to her, 'Have you got a baby, or what is the matter with you? Which is it, a girl or a boy?'

841 I describe elsewhere the special precautions that are taken at the menarche to ensure freedom from conception. A girl must be careful not to throw away her cups and plates for if a witch can get hold of them, she can cause her a great deal of trouble. She should, on this occasion, take these vessels and the ash in which she has cleaned her pots to the river for the Yer Kanyang or

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Muria

appear immediately, was a person of great influence among the Maria of Bijapur Tahsil. 674x 684

He was, however, a cruel and unnatural man. About a year before his murder, he seduced the wives of each of his two sons, and not content merely to seduce them drove out of his house his own wife and his two sons, and lived there openly with the two young girls. He refused to do anything to maintain his wife and would not give his sons any share in the family property, although by tribal custom he should have allowed its partition, since he was doing nothing to support his family.

When the sons applied to the panchayat for justice, that body met, but so great was Gunda's influence that they were afraid to take any strong line against him. But they did excommunicate him for his relations with the wives of his own sons and for the even more serious offence of keeping a Ghasia woman. [688]

In May 1928, one of the sons, Hemla Mundra, went to his father's house and attempted to get some share of the property. He failed then, but on the afternoon before the murder, returned and tried to take away two cows from the family herd. His father caught him and abused him, and the boy was so annoyed that he struck the older man on the face with a lathi, a blow that probably fractured the jaw. Gunda prepared to go to the police station to make a report against his son. Mundra, reflecting that his father had not only robbed him of his wife and property, but was now going to deprive him of his liberty as well, decided to kill him and prevent him from going to the police. He managed to get ahead of Gunda on the path, and the moment he appeared broke his skull with several blows of a heavy stick.

The murder was regarded by the other Maria as justified, and they hushed up the whole affair, reporting to the police that Gunda had died of smallpox. Indeed the case would never have come to light, had it not been that a prisoner in jail in the vain hope of getting his own sentence mitigated reported the matter. Mr Grigson, who tried the case, sentenced the accused to one month's imprisonment.[1]

[1] A similar case was reported from the north of the State in 1940. Kanda, a Muria boy, killed his father near Pupgaon. The father had